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VOL. 46
4

THE INTERNATIONAL OIL INDUSTRY: RECENT CHANGES

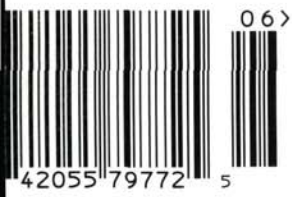
Michael Tanzer

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Asoka Bandarage

ALGERIAN WOMEN CONFRONT FUNDAMENTALISM

Karima Bennoune



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CONTENTS | VOLUME 46 NUMBER 4 SEPTEMBER 1994

REVIEW OF THE MONTH: Subcommander Marcos is More than Just Gay 1

THE INTERNATIONAL OIL INDUSTRY: RECENT CHANGES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR MEXICO by Michael Tanzer 2

CUBA AND THE LIBERATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA by Sylvester Cohen, Jr. 17

ALGERIAN WOMEN CONFRONT FUNDAMENTALISM by Karima Bennoune 26

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT: TOWARD A SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENDA by Asoka Bandarage 40

REMEMBERING RALPH MILIBAND by Joel Kovel 51

BOOKS
Breaking the Mind-Forg'd Manacles by J. Quinn Brisben 59

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Before commenting on the latest developments in the health-care situation, it may be worthwhile to pause and have a look at its historical background.

In Europe and its overseas extensions, beginning around the middle of the nineteenth century, industrialization, class struggle, and increasing popular participation in government developed slowly and unevenly. Already before the First World War, what later came to be called the welfare state had emerged in the more advanced areas, particularly Germany and Britain. The great crises of the twentieth century—the two world wars and the Great Depression—strengthened these tendencies. By mid-century welfare states including more or less comprehensive health-care systems had become the norm in the developed capitalist countries. There was, however, one exception, the United States of America, where the class struggle was waged with particular ferocity and where capital succeeded better than anywhere else in maintaining the upper hand. Prior to the Great Depression there were hardly even the beginnings of a welfare state in the United States. Even during the 1930s, when the U.S. ruling class feared that it was losing control and felt obliged to make significant concessions, the resulting New Deal was still not much more than a beginning. In the field

(Continued on inside back cover)

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SUBCOMMANDER MARCOS IS MORE THAN JUST GAY

In April The San Francisco Chronicle *quoted Subcommander Marcos, voice of the Zapatista Revolutionaries in Chiapas, Mexico, as saying that he had worked in a San Francisco restaurant but had been fired for being gay. The pro-government Mexican press cried scandal—a queer revolutionary! The Zapatistas responded with the following communique:*

"About whether Marcos is homosexual:

"Marcos is gay in San Francisco, black in South Africa, an Asian in Europe, a Chicano in San Ysidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, a Mayan Indian in the streets of San Cristóbal, a gang member in Neza [a huge Mexico City slum], a rocker in the National University [a folk music citadel], a Jew in Germany, an ombudsman in the Defense Ministry, a communist in the post-Cold War era, an artist without gallery or portfolio. . . .

"A pacifist in Bosnia, a housewife alone on Saturday night in any neighborhood in any city in Mexico, a striker in the CTM [the giant pro-government union federation, which virtually never authorizes strikes], a reporter writing filler stories for the back pages, a single woman on the metro at 10 p.m., a peasant without land, an unemployed worker . . . an unhappy student, a dissident amid free-market economics, a writer without books or readers, and, of course, a Zapatista in the mountains of southeast Mexico.

"So Marcos is a human being, any human being, in this world. Marcos is all the exploited, marginalized, and oppressed minorities, resisting and saying, 'Enough!'"

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THE INTERNATIONAL OIL INDUSTRY: RECENT CHANGES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR MEXICO

by MICHAEL TANZER

A number of interrelated changes in the five years since the Cold War ended have had a negative impact on Third World oil producers. First, the continuing stagnation of the world economy and the shift toward other energy sources have slowed the growth in demand for oil products. Second, the Communist bloc, which once offered material support for Third World countries trying to develop their own oil resources, has collapsed. Third, this collapse has accelerated a trend toward privatization in the oil industry, as state ownership has been labelled a failure and private ownership touted as the only way forward. The result of all these factors has been that Third World countries, including those of the former Communist bloc, have been opened up to the international oil companies on a scale not seen since the 1950s, and on terms which are a throwback to that era of oil company dominance. In short, the balance of power between these companies and the Third World countries has shifted sharply to the companies. How and why this shift has taken place and its implications for Mexico are the subject of this article.

The effects of the world economic stagnation of the 1980s and the shift away from oil resulting from the doubling

Michael Tanzer, a frequent contributor to *Monthly Review*, is an economic consultant living in New York. This article is based on a public lecture delivered at the Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, UNAM, Mexico City, June 22, 1994.

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of oil prices in 1980 and continuing environmental pressures can be summarized in two sets of numbers. Between 1970 and 1980, world crude oil production increased by one-third, from 45 million barrels a day to 60 million barrels a day. Since then, after falling and rising, world production in the 1989-1993 period was still at that same 60 million barrel level—in short, there have been thirteen years of zero net growth.[1]

The collapse of the Communist bloc governments—which turned away from state capitalism and toward private foreign investment in the oil industry—is most significant in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and in China. The profound effects of this shift, particularly in the former Soviet Union, cannot be overestimated. At a most general level, the bipolar world once afforded the underdeveloped countries an umbrella under which they could attempt to gain control of their national economies. As regards oil specifically, the USSR in an earlier era played a variety of roles, such as saving Cuba from a strangling U.S. oil boycott, providing lower priced oil products to India, providing technology and capital for exploration and for building up production and refining industries in India and Vietnam.

The disappearance of this general support for underdeveloped countries in the post-Cold war era, as the former USSR began to privatize its economy and establish good relations with the United States, had some immediate material effects in the oil area. Most dramatically, Cuba found itself having to pay much higher prices for Soviet oil, which reduced the amount it could buy. This has been a major factor in the collapse of its economy. But above and beyond that, it is clear that the collapse of the Soviet bloc has helped lead many socialist-oriented governments and groups to conclude that there is no alternative to capitalism and privatization, at least in the near term. Is there any doubt, for example, that the Soviet collapse has been a factor in the ANC's movement away from a socialist platform of state ownership of natural resources? Not only has state ownership been ideologically discredited, but the former USSR no longer can or will act as

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a subsidizing supplier of capital and technology for such state ownership or as a barrier to Western political and/or military intervention in opposition to state ownership.

The recent trend toward privatization in the oil industry needs to be seen in historical perspective. For most of the 100-year history of the international oil industry, private ownership was the rule rather than the exception. Until the 1970s, except for the former Communist countries and a handful of Latin American countries (notably Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina), the world's oil reserves and production were owned and controlled by the big international oil companies. At the middle of the century, the seven largest private companies alone accounted for almost three-fifths of the non-Communist world's crude oil production and refining capacity. As recently as 1970, the private companies controlled 94 percent of all crude oil production and an even higher percentage of crude oil reserves. The upheavals of the 1970s drastically changed this picture, so that by 1981 the state companies of the oil-producing countries accounted for about three-fifths of the non-Communist world's crude oil production.

Of even greater significance in the long run was the private companies' loss of ownership of the vast crude oil reserves of the Third World, particularly of the Persian Gulf reserves in the 1970s. Today the top 234 private international oil companies hold only about 5 percent of the world's crude oil reserves of 1,000 billion barrels.[2] The situation is similar with regard to natural gas, which is widely agreed to be the hydrocarbon fuel of the future because it is less polluting than oil. The world's total proven natural gas reserves equal almost 5,000 trillion cubic feet, equivalent in energy content to 800 billion barrels of oil.

With leading private companies like Exxon and Royal Dutch Shell having proven reserves of crude oil equal to only eleven or twelve years' production at current rates, compared to forty-six years for the world as a whole, it is little wonder that the companies see recent events as a golden opportunity to improve their reserve position and save themselves from

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medium-term extinction. In the developed world, where reserve-to-production rates average ten to eleven years, a combination of fewer opportunities in these already heavily explored areas and strong resistance from environmental groups in more virgin areas means little opportunity for the companies. Thus, for example, from 1988 to 1992 exploration and development expenditures in the United States by the top 234 private companies dropped from $18 billion to $13 billion, while outside the United States they increased from $23 billion to $31 billion.

The Arena of Privatization

At present, the companies' greatest long run hope for reaping benefits from privatization seems to lie in the former Communist bloc. Although the political climate in the CIS is far from stable, the opportunities are enormous, given the huge *proven* oil and gas reserves. As the *Petroleum Economist* noted recently, after a perceived setback to "reform,"

> Oil companies are feeling downhearted, but, for most of them, Russia's huge oil reserves make the idea of going home empty-handed unthinkable. Instead, they will hang around and wait and see what happens.

The best bet for the private companies in the CIS appears to be Kazakhstan, which is eager to export oil. The two largest projects which have been launched are an Elf production-sharing contract to develop a 19,000 square-kilometer area and a Chevron 50-50 production-sharing joint venture to increase production on the huge Tengiz field. Among the attractions of operating in Kazakhstan is that "President Nursuitan Nazarbayev aims to become an economic partner of the West and he is doing his best to achieve that." One result is that "the lack of legislation in Kazakhstan means that environmental considerations can generally be overlooked."[3]

More concretely, the two agreements appear to be on extremely favorable terms for the companies. Thus the Elf contract provides that the company gets 40 percent of all

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production up to 100,000 barrels per day, with its share declining in stages to 15 percent on all production over 400,000 barrels per day. Along with Chevron's 50-50 sharing arrangements, such agreements are a throwback to the pre-OPEC contracts of the 1950s. By way of comparison, typical production-sharing agreements of the late 1970s gave the companies no more than 15 to 20 percent, and in the case of Vietnam, no more than 3 to 5 percent. Moreover, these agreements were for exploration in relatively risky areas rather than proven areas like Kazakhstan.

Little wonder then that Chevron's general manager of finance for the Tengiz project exulted in the company's *Annual Report* (1993) that "Chevron is building on the potential here as it did in the Middle East in the 1930s and Indonesia in the 1940s."[4] Where else could one obtain, for a cash outlay of about $200 million, an immediate increase in proven reserves of over 1 billion barrels plus 1.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas? Some idea of the potential significance of this contract for a company like Chevron may be seen from the fact that the Tengiz tract has reserves of at least 6 billion barrels, so that Chevron's half would be greater than its total oil reserves in the rest of the world.

The biggest obstacle to the oil companies' materializing these dreams is the fact that, as a recent survey by the Russian Academy of Sciences showed, two-thirds of the people agreed that "privatization is legalized theft" and that it was undertaken "for the benefit of criminals."[5] Still, the international oil companies are pushing on every front for privatization.

A similar process of opening up to Western oil companies has been going on for even a longer period in China. Since 1982 China had made over seventy agreements with foreign companies to explore offshore, but despite over $3 billion in investment, little was found. Now China is opening up onshore areas for exploration, including 73,000 square kilometers in the Tarim Basin, in which the Chinese state company has already discovered five large oil fields, the most recently discovered of which has estimated reserves of 750

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million barrels. According to the *Petroleum Economist*, the Tarim Basin has been described by one Western oil company executive as an "incredible prize" and "is one of the last prospective areas in the world still to be explored by foreign companies."[6] Moreover, as the *Petroleum Economist* points out, exploration terms will clearly be attractive to foreign companies:

> Few oilmen expect China to depart from the flexible and pragmatic approach that has previously characterised negotiations with companies. Current terms, which include some element of production-sharing, are reasonably attractive and the Chinese authorities have proven willing, in the past, to liberalise terms to maintain investor interest, claimed one oil executive. "During the last couple of years, for instance, onerous training requirements of nationals during the exploration stage have been eliminated and royalty payments adjusted downwards, to make it more attractive for companies to explore for marginal oilfields."[7]

What is impelling the Chinese government to bring in foreign oil companies, despite its own state company's long record of success in raising China's oil production from virtually nil in 1950 to almost 3 million barrels per day? The most obvious answer is that in the post-Mao era the government, which has been increasingly pursuing rapid economic growth at any price, has been exporting its oil resources to pay for capital imports. Even though China has been a net exporter of oil for the last two decades, that position has now ended, and in 1993 the country imported 10 percent of its crude oil supply.[8] This is because, "while oil production has remained virtually stagnant in recent years, consumption, fueled by rapid economic growth and low domestic oil prices, has been growing by around 8 percent per annum."[9]

Aside from the former Communist bloc, and closer to home, Latin America has also seen a push for privatization. The most advanced case is Argentina, where Gas del Estado, the state monopoly of gas transmission and distribution, was privatized at the end of 1992. According to the executive who managed the process, it "succeeded because of the World

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Bank's involvement from the outset."[10] More significantly, last year 45 percent of the shares in YPF, the country's monopoly oil and gas producer and refiner, were sold off for $3 billion to local and foreign private investors. Peru is attempting to follow closely on Argentina's heels, with plans to sell off the state oil company, Petroperu, in its entirety. In Colombia and Ecuador, the state oil companies have been under heavy pressure to open up attractive areas for exploration by private companies.

Overall, a competition is being set up among countries to lower their terms, particularly in the light of recent changes in the industry described previously. As the *Petroleum Economist* noted:

> With profit levels squeezed by soft oil prices and demand for products stagnant, companies are becoming more selective in their choice of exploration venture. What compounds South America's problems is that the squeeze on company investment funds has coincided with a flood of new exploration opportunities in eastern Europe and the Far East where conditions are deemed more attractive.[11]

While not insignificant in terms of setting precedents, these countries are relatively unimportant compared to the countries with the three largest oil reserves in Latin America—Venezuela, Mexico and Brazil—which together account for about 12 percent of the world's reserves. Venezuela is the first to begin to succumb to pressures to let private companies into oil exploration and development. Thus far negotiations have taken place only in the areas of developing and upgrading heavy Orinoco crude, which is a highly capital-intensive task. While the Venezuelan government has also expressed interest in having private companies "reactivate" marginal fields, this would only be on the basis of service contracts under which the private company would have to sell the oil back to the state oil company.[12] As for Brazil, while the pressures are great, including, for example, the World Bank's refusal to fund a proposed gas pipeline from Bolivia to Brazil if Petrobras is

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involved, nothing is likely to be decided until after the presidential elections in October.

Pemex and Mexican Oil

This brings us to a subject I am sure is dear to the heart of this audience, namely the pressures for privatization of Mexico's oil industry. While I am sure that many of you have a much better understanding of the situation than I do, let me indicate what it looks like to an outsider, and perhaps we can discuss this in more detail later. The sacred principle that Pemex should own and control the country's oil industry is slowly being nibbled away. A consortium led by Valero Energy Corporation of San Antonio, Texas, is building a $350 million gasoline additive plant in Veracruz, thereby breaking into Pemex's monopoly of refining facilities. Diamond Shamrock of San Antonio is opening up 200 gasoline service stations with Mexican operators, thereby "skirting a ban on foreign ownership of service stations."[13] Other U.S. oil companies, such as Amoco and Texaco, have been doing technical studies, providing engineering services, and drilling offshore wells for Pemex.

The hope of the foreign oil companies is that these steps, while undoubtedly profitable in themselves, will set the precedent for their ultimate goal:

> Of course, what the oil majors really want is to explore for oil, take a percentage of the find, and help manage Mexico's vast fields. They lobbied heavily for such privileges during negotiations over the North American Free Trade Agreement last year, but Mexico held firm. Hopeful that Mexico will eventually soften, they are waiting in the wings—and snapping up whatever peripheral business comes along.[14]

The ultimate imperialist dream is that Mexico would follow a recommendation in a study prepared for the conservative U.S. "think tank," the Heritage Foundation, that Mexico privatize all of Pemex's assets and use the estimated $150 billion in proceeds to retire the country's foreign debt! The foundation's study is worth examining in some detail as a

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blueprint for the goals of the big oil companies. These goals, in ascending order of importance, are:

(1) Allowing "risk contracts" for oil exploration and development.

(2) Allowing majority foreign investment in petrochemicals.

(3) Dividing Pemex into separate, competitive companies.

(4) Allowing domestic and foreign competition with Pemex.

(5) Privatizing Pemex.[15]

The study's case for these various proposals rests on three arguments:

(1) Pemex does not invest enough, either in oil exploration and development or in petrochemicals, so foreign capital is necessary.

(2) Breaking Pemex into separate companies, each of which operates on its own and operates solely for profits, and then allowing domestic and foreign competition, would make Pemex more efficient.

(3) Privatizing Pemex entirely would allow Mexico to pay off its entire foreign and domestic debt. Also, Pemex has a poor environmental record and private companies would do better.

The basic fallacies in these arguments are:

(1) As the study admits, the government takes 94 percent of Pemex's profits as taxes, so it is not surprising that Pemex has little money left for capital investment in exploration and development or refining. Moreover, the study fails to note that if foreign investment is allowed in, and conservatively speaking it seeks at least a profit rate of 20 percent per year, compounded, then for each $1 invested, over a twenty year period the foreigner would seek to take out of Mexico $95.

(2) While the study wants Pemex broken into separate companies, the private oil companies operate in the opposite way, seeking full vertical integration in order to coordinate as

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much as possible their oil production and refining and marketing activities. Moreover, separating Pemex into separate companies and allowing in foreign competition would greatly weaken Mexico, since the new entities would be smaller and have less flexibility; for example, in the recent period of relatively low crude oil profits, the big private companies are using their higher refining and marketing profits to keep overall profits level, and Pemex would not have that option. So splitting up Pemex would simply weaken it, which is probably the study's real goal.

(3) Finally, if Pemex were sold for $150 billion, most of that would by necessity have to come from foreigners. If they are seeking a 20 percent profit rate on their investment, then Mexico would need to pay $30 billion per year just for profits, and the huge foreign debt would soon be restored and surpassed. (As for the environmental record of Pemex, given the record of Exxon in Alaska, for example, I doubt that the private companies would do any better, and likely would do a lot worse.)

I would like to add that the case being made by foreigners today for privatizing Pemex is amazing to me because it is virtually the same case that was made against Pemex thirty years ago, before Pemex turned Mexico into a major oil-producing country. Thus, in a book I wrote twenty-five years ago I noted that the World Bank had commissioned a study which "discussed Pemex's performance between 1938 and 1959, and concluded that in the past Pemex had failed in a vital area since it had been unable to earn an adequate return on its capital investment; as a result Pemex also was unable to accumulate funds for steady future expansion."[16] I went on to show that this conclusion was based on the same kind of false analysis used by the Heritage study, since it analyzed Pemex like a private company and failed to take into account that Pemex's profits and subsequent ability to reinvest were greatly reduced both by the government's setting low oil prices and its taxing away most of Pemex's profits. In fact, if you analyze Pemex's experience correctly in terms of its contribution to

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the Mexican economy, the social rate of profit on its investment comes out somewhere in the range of 25 to 35 percent per year.

Moreover, Pemex's success at this time was clearly seen by the *Wall Street Journal*, whose 1967 story on Pemex was headlined "Model monopoly—nationalized oil agency in Mexico so successful it worries the industry—firms fear other lands may follow example of Pemex," and continued as follows:

> Private oil company executives are worried about the impact an increasingly efficient Pemex might have on private oil operations in the rest of Latin America and in the Mideast. "As a successful government venture, Pemex is the model for other countries wanting to nationalize their oil," says an apprehensive vice president of a United States-based international petroleum concern.[17]

And all of this was prior to the Pemex discoveries which increased the country's known reserves tenfold and turned it into a major oil exporter.

The internal pressures on Pemex to privatize seem ultimately to come from the same abandonment of self-sufficiency principles that took place in China. Thus for many years Pemex's goal was to find enough oil to meet internal consumption demands, and when self-sufficiency was reached production was thereafter matched to consumption. However, in the mid-1970s the decision was taken to export crude oil, and the great growth in these exports was used to pay for capital imports. Now, like China, with domestic oil at a low price and demand growing rapidly, Mexico has to spend huge sums it does not readily have (particularly since it already has a huge foreign debt burden from the oil boom of the 1970s) simply to stand still—with Pemex estimating it needs $23 billion over five years just to maintain reserves. This, then, opens the door to the foreign investor. In *Business Week's* words, "For Pemex, it's a matter of survival. Analysts warn that Mexico could become a net importer of oil and natural gas by 2000 if investment in capital-starved Pemex isn't forthcoming

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soon."[18] Thus, by pushing up production well beyond internal consumption needs in order to finance rapid economic growth, Mexico has mounted a tiger from which it is hard to get off safely; had it conserved its oil reserves, there would have been less of a boom, but Mexico could have had a slower but more orderly development and not become so dependent on foreigners, particularly in terms of debt.

The Problem of Growth

In my view this is a part of a very fundamental problem in development economics in general. The reality is that the faster the rate of economic growth sought, the greater the danger to the society, and especially to the lower classes, who in principle are supposed to be the main beneficiaries of this rapid growth. Pushing for rapid growth generally goes hand in hand with increasing reliance on the most advanced technologies and large amounts of capital, both of which are normally only found in the hands of foreigners. This is especially true when the rapid growth is based on market forces, because the initial growth spurt inevitably leads to greater income inequality, with the first beneficiaries being those most closely connected with foreign capital. This in turn leads to increased luxury consumption, further increases in imports and debt, and then to foreign dependency. The ultimate contradiction is the boom in a Third World country where oil is discovered, with foreign technology and capital providing the basis, and the result is massive imports of luxury cars, pollution where none existed, and a new dependency on foreigners and on oil production just to keep the economy going.

The negative environmental effects of rapid economic growth of course go beyond mere pollution. There is also the disruption of the communities and lives of people, particularly when these changes take place in an unplanned manner and the poor and powerless are left at the mercy of the heartless market.

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Ten years ago I argued that in resource-rich countries of the Third World, where the state itself accumulates large amounts of capital, there is a strong tendency for private elites to use their control over the state to transfer this capital to the private sector. In the resource boom decade of the early 1970s to early 1980s when the state sector was flourishing, the characteristic manifestation of this tendency was a deliberate drive toward over-rapid economic growth. This translated into contracting for too many large projects and subsequent inflation, which effectively transferred the state's capital to the private sector, both domestic and foreign. Now, however, in an era of stagnation if not depression, and with the state sector foundering, the same push for over-rapid economic development can directly transfer to the private sector not only the state's capital flows but the assets that give rise to them.

Unfortunately, in today's world, economic growth has been identified as possible only with privatization and the free play of market forces. From virtually every direction, the push for privatization is almost overwhelming. Spearheading the drive are the multinational corporations, not least of which are the oil companies supported by their home governments. These companies, in pursuit of an ever quickening drive for profits and capital accumulation, having despoiled much of their home countries but, having generated strong opposing forces there, are now concentrating on the Third World for their resources and environmentally destructive activities. Of course, they are aided by the World Bank and the IMF, which use the Third World countries' huge debts to pry them open to privatization and foreign investment. But even leaders of countries which might once have chosen paths of growth through state control and planning are now being forced, insofar as they adhere to goals of rapid economic growth, to turn to the foreign sector, for reasons discussed earlier. And when societies shift their ideologies from "everything for the common good" to "it's good to get rich," it's very easy for corruption to be rationalized by government leaders.

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What Is to Be Done?

In the face of such a dismal situation, it is time to ask this famous question again. In my opinion, at the most general level, progressives who genuinely desire to see the lives of the masses in the Third World improve need to shed their illusions about economic growth in the conventional sense. What are needed instead are strategies for increasing the well-being of the masses, primarily in areas which do not involve vast production of manufactured commodities—areas such as food and housing, health, education, and recreation. The focus needs to be on maximizing the use of the vast amounts of unemployed and underemployed labor and on generating a much more equal distribution of income. If the pressure for rapid economic growth can be reduced, then in my opinion it would be possible to generate a slower but steadier improvement in a kind of economic growth that would directly improve the well-being of the masses.

Realistically, in today's world the forces pushing in the opposite direction are so strong that few if any countries are likely to feel in a position to pursue such a strategy. But the one thing I feel certain about is that the international market system will not be able to provide the rapid growth it promises, and that ultimately it will be seen as a false hope for improving the lives of the masses of Third World people. In the meantime, several things can be done. First, it is necessary to dispel the illusions of market-driven successes in the Third World, like the "Brazilian miracle" of the 1960s and early 1970s, which collapsed under the burden of foreign debt into today's stagnation. Even in its boom period a Brazilian president admitted that "the economy is doing fine, only the people are suffering." Second, we need to recall our history, and to analyze the successes where coordinated governmental planning and action led to far more positive results than the actions of market forces—for example, in China from 1950 to 1975, where massive hunger, illiteracy, and poverty were largely eliminated while they remained rampant in neighbor-

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ing India; or closer to home, in Cuba, where despite all its problems, the health and education standards are the envy of Latin America. Finally, we must support all efforts by Third World countries to break out of the system of the international market and to develop innovative ways of raising their peoples' standards of living.

In the oil area specifically, there is a need to analyze the performance of public sector enterprises like Pemex objectively. From my studies I believe that such an analysis would show a history of considerable success, particularly when compared to the historical record of private oil companies in the Third World. Moreover, where there have been failures, such as corruption or environmental disasters, the solution is not to destroy the public enterprise and turn it over to private oil companies—after all, they have some dismal records in these areas also. Rather, in my opinion, the solution is much more democratic control over the enterprises.

NOTES

1. UN, *World Economic Survey*, 1991, p. 95, and *Oil and Gas Journal* (27 December 1993): 45.
2. Top 234 company data is from *Petroleum Economist* (September 1993): 10-13.
3. *PE (February 1994): 5, 21.*
4. Chevron Company's *Annual Report*, 1993, p. 10.
5. *New York Times*, 19 June 1994, Sec. 6, p. 30.
6. *PE* (April 1993): 12.
7. Ibid.
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CUBA AND THE LIBERATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

by SYLVESTER COHEN, Jr.

From the 1970s onward, Cuba provided military and developmental assistance that helped stabilize the governments of Angola and Mozambique and strengthened such liberation movements in Southern Africa as the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe/Rhodesia, the Southwest African Peoples Organization in Namibia (SWAPO), and the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC). With the military advisors and training provided by Cuba, Southern African liberation movements were able successfully to challenge the power of white minority governments in the region. Above all, Cuba helped undermine these governments by fighting alongside the African nationalists in Angola.

The Portuguese colonial governments in Angola and Mozambique were the first minority governments Cuba helped defeat in the region. From 1965 to 1974 Cuba gave military assistance to the members of the trans-territorial Conference on Nationalist Organizations in the Portuguese Colonies, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), headed by Agostinho Neto, and the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo), headed by Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel.[1]

After Mozambique became independent in 1975, Frelimo allowed the ANC to maintain training camps in Mozambique with Cuban advisors until the signing of the

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Nkomati Accords with apartheid South Africa. Under the Nkomati Accords, Frelimo closed ANC training camps in Mozambique. Even before the Nkomati Accords, however, Frelimo did not allow ANC guerrillas the systematic use of its borders for launching attacks on South Africa. However muted the displeasure of the ANC with Frelimo, it was obvious that the ANC was not happy with South Africa's having a secure 300-mile border with Mozambique. Frelimo kept its distance from the Cubans, looking more to China in the 1970s. During the Rhodesian conflict, Mozambique allowed its 700-mile western border to be used by Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) insurgents, headed by Robert Mugabe. In the event, the Rhodesian and South African governments fostered a successful counterrevolutionary movement (Renamo) in Mozambique. The tactics utilized by Renamo guerrillas included looting, burning villages, and destroying crops. Women and girls were raped and tens of thousands of Mozambicans were maimed or murdered. Renamo also kidnapped thousands of young boys to conscript them into its army. The result was that vast areas of the Mozambican countryside became uninhabitable. In the 1980s Frelimo had millions of its citizens in refugee camps dependent upon international aid for their survival. In 1992 Frelimo, in desperation, reached an agreement with Renamo to observe a cease-fire and eventually to hold elections to resolve their differences with ballots instead of bullets. These events were an early demonstration of the extreme vulnerability of the new regimes founded by the Southern African liberation movements.

In these circumstances, Cuba provided considerable aid: military training for Frelimo troops, educational training for Frelimo cadres at home and in Cuba, technical assistance, Cuban medical personnel and training. By 1978, over a thousand Mozambican secondary students had begun studying in Cuba. According to Gillian Gunn, a specialist on Cuban involvement in Southern Africa, "more than 6,500 Mozambicans . . . studied in Cuba" by the late 1980s.[2] She further notes

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that "800 technical experts [had] returned from training in Cuba." Gunn quotes Mozambican officials as saying "they are making a real difference."[3] But it was in Angola that Cuba made its greatest sacrifice and greatest contribution to the liberation of Southern Africa.

Because Cuba perceived events in Angola to be critical to the South African apartheid regime's domination of southern and central Africa, Castro sent a large military force to help the MPLA drive out the South African invaders during the first near-successful phase of the Angolan civil war (1975-1976). When Castro spoke before the Cuban Communist Party's First Party Congress in December 1975, he declared the rationale for Cuba's intervention. Cuban troops were sent, he said:

> . . . because South Africa's occupation of Angola poses a threat to the whole of Africa; the occupation of Angola by the South African racists poses a grave threat to Zambia, to Mozambique, to Zaire, to the People's Republic of the Congo and to the whole of Africa . . . and in this struggle, the Cuban people will be on the side of the African peoples![4]

South Africa, China, the Soviet Union, and the United States had moved to fill the "vacuum" in Angola left by the departing Portuguese. As a result, the end of Angola's colonial war did not reduce tensions in the region. In the contest already underway, the MPLA had been fighting Holden Roberto's National Front for the Liberation of Angola (backed by the United States, China, and Zaire) and Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (backed by South Africa and the United States). In the spring of 1975 Cuba sent advisors to the MPLA in order to counterbalance China's training of FNLA troops and the CIA's increasing support for the FNLA and UNITA. With Cuban advisors, MPLA military forces repulsed the armies of its two nationalist rivals.[5] But late in September 1975 the MPLA was simultaneously attacked by South African columns invading through southern Angola and Zairian units support-

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ing FNLA in the northern region. Rather than see the MPLA take control of Angola at independence, scheduled for November 11, 1975, South Africa invaded the country to install a UNITA-FNLA coalition government which, unlike MPLA, would have prohibited Namibian and South African insurgents from operating on Angolan soil. Zaire's President Mobutu committed some military units alongside FNLA, the forces of his brother-in-law Holden Roberto. Faced with formidable strength and realizing that it needed reinforcements, MPLA requested Cuban troops.

In explaining Cuba's motives for assuming this role, Castro proudly exclaimed that Cuba had no vested interest in the civil war: "We do not need anything in Angola." Cuba, he said, was simply pursuing its "traditional policy of internationalism."[6] And, on balance, even taking into account the Soviet-Chinese rivalries of the period and possible domestic good will among the many Cubans of Angolan descent, this characterization does not seem overstated.

After the defeat of the anti-MPLA coalition, Cuba's military forces remained in Angola to help the MPLA consolidate political control and protect itself from external threats. Due to the solidarity of the Angolan government with the liberation movements of Namibia and South Africa, the main threat to Angola came from thousands of South African soldiers massed in Namibia along Angola's southern border. Considerable tension between Angola and South Africa existed from the late 1970s through the 1980s, as South African military forces based in Namibia repeatedly violated Angolan territory and air space. This tension was exacerbated by South Africa's continued assistance to UNITA in its stubborn guerrilla activities in Angola. UNITA had several thousand guerrillas based in Angola and Namibia in the late 1970s. Savimbi claimed in 1981 to have the strength of "15,000 guerrillas."[7] That figure seems somewhat exaggerated, but it is likely that he had at least half that many in the early 1980s.

In addition to providing military aid, Cuba assisted Angola in nation-building, providing education, medical, and

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economic aid. On the Isle of Pines eight secondary schools were built exclusively for students from Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia. Thousands of students from these three countries attended.[8] According to a report in the *Prensa Latina News*, nearly a thousand Cuban volunteers went to Angola in 1978 to work as primary-school teachers.[9]

In his December 1977 address to the First Congress of the MPLA, Dr. Neto stated that at the time he was speaking, only one Angolan province out of sixteen was without Cuban health technicians.[10] Cuban doctors were not only staffing Angolan hospitals but were also assisting in training Angolan medical personnel. With Cuban assistance, seventeen medical schools were opened across Angola, compared to four under the Portuguese.

Cuban experts were employed as advisors in all branches of the Angolan government, including the Ministry of Interior. Angola received two fishing vessels from Cuba, one of which President Neto named for Fidel Castro. Cuban seamen served with and trained Angolans in the use of these vessels. There were 1,300 Cubans involved in the Angolan construction industry by 1979.[11] According to Díaz-Briquets and Perez-López, "By the end of 1982, over 10,000 Cuban construction workers had seen service in Angola, generally for an average period of 18 months."[12]

In 1983 Cuba waived payments for civilian personnel working in Angola. This was publicly acknowledged by President Eduardo dos Santos in January 1985: "Over a year ago Cuba decided to stop receiving payments for services rendered by its foreign aid workers in Angola as a form of aid to the Angolan people. Despite the payment suspension, Cuban civilian personnel rose to near the 10,000 mark."[13]

The decisive contribution of the Cuban forces in Angola occurred in the winter of 1987-1988 at the fierce battle of Cuito Cuanavale. The Angolan government and the Namibian Liberation Movement (SWAPO) were threatened with destruction by a strong UNITA offensive supported directly by massive South African armed forces. The Cuban govern-

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ment rapidly raised its troop level in Angola from 35,000 to 50,000 men. The combined Cuban/Angolan/SWAPO forces defeated the South African/UNITA invaders. The victory at Cuito Cuanavale allowed Cuba and the Angolan government to negotiate two favorable treaties in December 1988, leading directly to the liberation of Namibia and indirectly to the liberation of South Africa.

Pursuant to the treaties Cuba agreed to withdraw all its combat troops from Angola in return for a South African withdrawal from Angola and Namibia, to be followed by UN-supervised elections in Namibia with SWAPO participation. Angola agreed to have UN-monitored elections in Angola. By 1991 Cuba was able to withdraw all its combat troops from Angola with its prestige intact.

The Cuban withdrawal (the primary demand of the United States, which intervened forcefully after Cuito Cuanavale), however productive of freedom for Namibia, had disastrous consequences in Angola. The treaties had provided for elections and a process of disarmament. In the 1992 UN-monitored elections, the MPLA defeated UNITA. But UNITA (unlike the MPLA) had not disarmed, and aided by its friends in the United States it launched a vicious surprise attack with nightmarish consequences for Angola. Here, the end of the "cold war" and Cuba's isolation resulted in blood and horror for the people of Angola.

From 1975 to 1976, the near victory of the Cuban-Angolan force in Angola provided SWAPO with a semi-secure base of operation in southern Angola for its insurgency in Namibia. Cuban/Angolan forces were joined by Namibian forces at the crucial battle of Cuito Cuanavale. In the UN-supervised elections SWAPO gained control of the Namibian government with some 60 percent of the vote. The Cuban contribution to the liberation of Namibia was great indeed, as has been recognized by Sam Nujoma, leader of SWAPO and Namibia's first president.

During the last few years of the Rhodesian conflict, Cuba had provided military assistance to one of the two liberation

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movements fighting in Rhodesia, Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU. Laurance Pintak, reporting for the *London Times*, asserted that in July 1978 more than 2,000 of Nkomo's Zimbabwe Peoples Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) guerrillas were flown to Zambia from camps in Angola.[14] The ZIPRA forces numbered approximately 12,000. Pintak further claimed that there were approximately seventy-five Cuban military advisors in Zambia training ZIPRA "in the use of light artillery and rocket launchers—weapons of conventional, not guerrilla wars. . . ."[15]

The growing effectiveness of Nkomo's ZIPRA was of interest to Robert Mugabe, leader of the other Zimbabwe liberation movement (ZANU), when he traveled to Havana in October 1978. It was the second time in six weeks that Mugabe had held talks with Castro. Mugabe had the problem of having more recruits than weapons and the weapons he had were outmoded. Mugabe requested more military support from Cuba, the Soviet Union, and other socialist countries. After independence, ZIPRA's conventional weapons would have given it an advantage over Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA). Cuba was receptive to ZANU's request for military support.

In the past, Mugabe might have been able to get much of what he wanted from China. Mugabe had usually sent his cadres to China for training.[16] He was reportedly receiving arms from China via Mozambique.[17] However, after Mao Tse-Tung's death, China curtailed its military support to ZANLA and other liberation movements in Southern Africa.[18] His main source of weapons declining, Mugabe realized that it was imperative for ZANU to acquire alternative weapons and training from Cuba and the Soviet Union. According to David Martin in *The Observer*:

> Dr. Castro told Mugabe that in the future Cuba would not discriminate and would support equally both ZANU and ZAPU. Cuba, he said, was not in a position to supply armaments, but he indicated that they would be willing to give training, food, medicines, clothing and international support, and increase liaison with ZANU by strengthening the Cuban Embassy in Maputo.[19]

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At the time the meeting took place, Cuban military instructors were already training 500 members of ZANLA at a militia camp outside Addis Ababa.[20] Cuba also trained ZANLA guerrillas in Mozambique. In 1978, with the aid of Castro and Neto, Mugabe finally convinced the Soviets to consider backing ZANU. The Soviet Union was indeed moving closer to ZANU at the time of the Lancaster House Settlement (December 1979), which brought about a cease-fire and an agreement for British-supervised elections in 1980. Cuban support for the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe (ZANU/ZAPU) undoubtedly hastened the end of the Rhodesian/Zimbabwean conflict. In the ensuing elections Mugabe and ZANU came to power in Zimbabwe (1980).

Cuba contributed to the liberation of South Africa. Cuito Cuanavale was a turning point of world historic significance. In addition, Cuba had for years provided military training, advice, and logistical support for the African National Congress of South Africa. The assistance facilitated ANC guerrilla activities inside South Africa. According to Tom Lodge, an expert on the ANC, Cubans taught "prospective ANC guerrilla recruits . . . to handle automatic rifles, RPG7 rocket launchers, hand-grenades, as well as the light weaponry employed by the South African Defense Force."[21] Lodge asserts that South African police sources considered the quality of Cuban instruction excellent.

In the historic battle of Cuito Cuanavale, ANC guerrillas served as scouts tracking UNITA troop movements for the FAPLA, Namibian, and Cuban forces.[22] Cuba was crucial in bringing about majority rule in Angola, Namibia, and South Africa, and made significant contributions to the liberation of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. This is why Nelson Mandela, after his release from prison, promptly visited Cuba to thank Castro and the Cuban people for their help in the liberation of the subcontinent.

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(*Continued from page 50*)
whole concept of health-care reform, and they may yet get worse in the process of debate and amendment.

In this gloomy picture there is only one ray of light, the California referendum on a single-payer system for that state, which will be decided by the voters on election day in November. We will have a report on that campaign and its possible implications in next month's issue.

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ALGERIAN WOMEN CONFRONT FUNDAMENTALISM

by KARIMA BENNOUNE

Algeria's current crisis has found its way to the front pages of many U.S. and European newspapers and magazines. Not surprisingly, the situation of Algerian women within that crisis and the assault on their rights by Algerian Muslim fundamentalists[1] do not figure as central issues in the media portrayal of this moment in Algerian history. Press reports and those of major human rights organizations have shared this gynopia, and this particular aspect of their blindness has drastically altered the vision of Algeria offered for Western consumption, obscuring the nature of Algerian fundamentalism and the possible reasons for indigenous opposition to it.

While I was in Algiers in February 1994, the prominent leader of a women's group in Algeria, who herself has been placed on fundamentalist death lists and has had to leave her home for safety reasons, expressed to me her outrage at the recent reports of Middle East Watch for failing to address women's concerns.[2] This is not a new phenomenon. When I first met her in 1992 she had stressed to me that when women activists had been protesting in the streets against the 1984

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Family Code, they had been alone with the police and that no government and no international human rights organization had done or said anything to support them. In this article, I argue that situating the fundamentalist assault on women's rights at the center of an analysis of Algeria's current crisis is key to understanding it, and is a necessary component of any "human rights" critique.

In fact, at least forty-eight Algerian women have been deliberately targeted and assassinated, principally by the two main armed fundamentalist groups, the Mouvement Islamique Armé (MIA) and the Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA).[3] The women have primarily been shot or burned to death, while methods of decapitation and throat-slitting have been reserved for the male victims of the fundamentalist armed groups, including doctors, journalists, and professors. In recent months the women victims have included a school principal in the Algiers suburb of Birkhadem; a widow who lived alone with her five children who was burned alive in Douera, another suburb; a 22-year-old woman in Blida out buying cigarettes dressed in blue jeans, who thereby fit the fundamentalist definition of "prostitute"; a high-school student in the Mitidja who was told that she had to veil but did not yield to such coercion; and even several fortune tellers. As early as 1993, the women victims of fundamentalist violence included a 22-year-old whose "crime" was working as a secretary at a local police station to support her parents, brothers, and sisters. She was shot in the head while walking home from work. Many other women have been killed or wounded in the crossfire between the fundamentalist paramilitary groups and the security forces of the state, the government having mistakenly decided to deal with the situation primarily as a military problem.

Foreign women married to Algerians have also been targeted, and several have been murdered by fundamentalist armed groups. These include a Russian convert to Islam who was the mother of five Algerian children and was shot in the head while shopping in the local market in Kouba, a

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fundamentalist stronghold and middle-class suburb of Algiers. An Algerian woman married to a Belgian man was "executed" along with her husband in January 1994 for committing the crime of interfaith marriage.[4] In March, a communiqué was issued stating that all women who appeared on the streets with their heads uncovered would risk assassination. On March 28, 1994, two fundamentalists on a motor bike gunned down high school students Raziqa Meloudjemi and Naima Kar Ali at the main bus station in Boumerdes, about 40 kilometers east of Algiers. Most recently, in late July, a widowed pharmacist, her daughter, and her mother were raped and killed in Batna.

Countless other women have faced terrifying threats of death and torture from the fundamentalist armed groups. While I was in Algeria in February 1994, I met a woman school inspector who was forced to go into hiding after receiving such threats. This woman, an extremely articulate and dedicated professional who is quadrilingual, received the following letter. Because such information seems to be under embargo in the U.S. press, I quote at length here:

> For [Miss X] old maid, School inspector, If you do not solve the problems of Muslims which you have created before the end of Ramadan, you will have your throat cut like all tyrants and sinners. The conditions on you are: (1)Wearing the *hijab* permanently after the first day of Ramadan, (2)asking forgiveness from the Muslims that you have made suffer in your behavior as a tyrant, (3)we are watching you and we know where you live. We are not afraid of the police or the gendarmes but we will cut your throat before the end of Ramadan. If you do not [meet these conditions] before the end of Ramadan, you are responsible. We warned you before cutting your throat.
>
> [Signed], The Islamic Group of el Harrache, Head of the Group Azedine, Long Live Islam, Long Live the GIA, the armed struggle for an Islamic state in Algeria

The woman who received this letter has been forced from her home and has had to significantly alter her work schedule. She lives in fear, feeling, as she told me, as if she is

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"living in a waking nightmare." Her family is also terrified. She is but one of many such women. Threats such as these have led to a mass exodus of Algerian professionals to Europe.

Women have been further pressured to cease performing certain activities seen as "unclean" by fundamentalists, such as teaching boys in school, owning or frequenting the hairdressers, or even going to the *hammam* or Turkish bath, which has been a part of many Algerian women's lives since at least the middle ages. In February and March 1994, the GIA also began a campaign of abducting and raping young girls and women. This has particularly occurred in Ain Defla and in Bouera, where even the wife of a non-fundamentalist imam was raped by members of an armed group.

Fundamentalist violence against women in Algeria is not a new phenomenon. Its contemporary beginnings are to be found in the late 1970s, when Muslim fundamentalists began intimidating female university students on campuses throughout Algeria, including sometimes throwing acid on women students who refused to veil. The phenomenon has increased with a vengeance from that time to this. Initially, it was not taken seriously by the international human rights community or by the Algerian authorities. As emphasized by Khalida Messaoudi (a prominent woman activist and president of the Independent Association for the Triumph of Women's Rights), women were the first to be targeted by fundamentalist terrorists. Then later, beginning in 1992, mainly male journalists and intellectuals were targeted. Had the violence against women been taken seriously at the time, Messaoudi suggests, the nature of the fundamentalist agenda could have been clearly understood and perhaps the later bloodshed could have been averted. Instead, the "political" nature of this violence against women was deliberately obscured.

The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) emerged as the major national opposition group in the late 1980s when political parties were legalized in the wake of the October 1988 repression.[5] For the FIS, the political system which would save Algeria was to be found in what Andre Gunder Frank de-

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scribed as "a regress to an often largely mythical golden age-like seventh century Islam." The growth of fundamentalism into a powerful force coincided with the terrible socioeconomic crisis of the 1980s, induced by clumsy privatizations, the dismantling of the national economy, and widespread corruption in Algeria's new right-wing government. But the FIS actually had two contradictory bases. While religious fundamentalism seemed to many young people to offer an alternative non-Western vision of the good society, critiquing both social injustice and cultural Westernization, the middle class and merchant base of the FIS was dedicated to protecting property rights in the name of Islam and allowing Western multinational investment in Algeria. In fact, the first contemporary fundamentalist grouping in Algeria coalesced in opposition to President Houari Boumedienne's land reform plan in the 1970s.

The FIS's analysis of the Algerian predicament was that the reasons for the crisis were not socioeconomic but were to be found in the cultural and religious failings of the society. An exemplary slogan was: "Our crisis is a crisis of faith and morals." As the economic situation worsened, this "cultural" explanation turned the fundamentalist focus to women. The FIS was obsessed with women's behavior, such as working, housekeeping, childrearing, etc., and used so-called failings of women in these contexts as explanations for various social evils. This analysis suited the designs of the regime in power also because it diverted attention away from the socioeconomic crisis for which it was so obviously responsible.

Hence, the government of Chadli Benjedid (1979-1992) colluded with the FIS to keep any progressive/left forces in check. In fact, members of the right wing of the FLN (the ruling party from independence in 1962 to 1992 and the only legal party until 1989) began to express views similar to those of the fundamentalists, using and contributing to the political climate shaped by the FIS. For example, in December 1989, a pro-fundamentalist FLN deputy in the National Assembly proposed to solve the problem of unemployment by sending

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women back to the kitchen. In addition to its offensiveness, the proposal was absurd given that there were only approximately 365,000 working women in Algeria and well over 1.5 million members of the work force were unemployed.

In Algeria's first multiparty elections of June 1990 the FIS won control of the majority of Algerian municipalities due to popular frustration and the lack of any relevant alternative. This stunned the country and had a devastating impact on the lives of many women. One of the top leaders of the FIS, Abassi Medani (who is now serving a seventeen-year jail sentence for sedition), said, when asked about Algeria's constitutional provisions calling for equal rights between the sexes, that all law contrary to the *Sharia* is unacceptable. Thus, in direct conflict with Algerian constitutional and statutory law, the FIS program was one of sexual apartheid which to varying degrees was implemented in the municipalities the party controlled.

FIS members and leaders were obsessed with what they called *mixité*, the mixing of the sexes outside of the family. Typical were the following comments published in the FIS newspaper: "Despite the disastrous consequences of this frightening epidemic [mixing of the sexes in public] that we see around the world, people do not wish to draw the appropriate conclusions and instead try to defend this cancer." In this context, the specter of women seducing married men and causing divorces was regularly raised.

To cure this social "malady," the FIS program included a proposal to stop "mixing" in the schools: separating boys and girls, excluding women from certain programs in higher education, and cutting back on women teachers being allowed to teach young men and thereby "poison" their minds. Meanwhile, fundamentalist teachers (of whom there were many) preached to children in classrooms that both of their parents would go to hell if their mothers did not veil or went swimming at the beach in a bathing suit.

Gender segregation was to extend to other public facilities. In hospitals the FIS hoped to have women doctors treat only women patients. They planned to have segregated buses

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for men and women, which would have greatly compounded the transportation crisis. Women were driven out of public facilities taken over by the FIS at the municipal level, like recreation and cultural centers. In their zeal to create a single sex public life, FIS-run city councils banned New Year celebrations, public dancing, mixed marriage ceremonies in hotels, the selling of alcohol, and the presence of women on beaches, as well as numerous concerts and plays.

The official program was coupled with the systematic harassment of women in neighborhoods where the FIS was powerful, especially women students, women going out to work, and women who refused to veil. A similar account of harassment was given to me by women of all socioeconomic backgrounds in Algiers and Constantine in May and June 1992.

The physical threats against women sometimes took shape on a broad scale. For example, in April 1990, *Algérie Actualité* reported a series of large-scale attacks on women. The targets included women's dorms at colleges, such as the University of Constantine. FIS militants would surround the buildings, organizing and imposing their own curfew on the women residents and assaulting women who tried to leave or enter. Another similar attack occurred at the University of Oran in January 1991 and a huge assault in this vein occurred in June 1989 at the University of Blida, when 300 FIS members surrounded the dorm throughout the night to prevent the women students from entering or leaving. The local police refused to intervene to protect the terrified women students. *Algérie Actualité* wrote of fundamentalist paramilitary groups known as "the redeemers" which had set themselves up in Blida to patrol the conduct of women. Their battle cry was "All girls who go out at night will die!" Other attacks were made on homes of women activists, businesses owned by women, and a mixed-sex recreational facility.

Some of the most vicious attacks were made on women who lived alone for various reasons, such as widows or divorcees who did not remarry. Examples include attacks on five widows in Bou Saada on the same night in April 1990 and

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another in Ouargla in July 1989. The latter attack merits further explanation. The woman victim was divorced by her husband and as a result of Algeria's family law, she was forced out of her home with her children.[6] Finally, after a period of homelessness, she was able to obtain some housing. However, a group of fundamentalist activists, deeming it "unnatural" for a woman to be living alone, organized and orchestrated an attack on her house. They began throwing stones at the house, causing the woman to run for help from the police. Meanwhile, her children tried to hide. But the men entered the home and chased the children from room to room. In terror, the thirteen-year-old daughter, who was carrying her seven-year-old disabled brother, ran into the bedroom and hid him under the bed. Despite the fact that the assailants saw the child under the bed, they firebombed the house and burned him alive.

The men involved in this conspiracy all had jobs (the poor alone cannot be scapegoated for fundamentalism, as they so often are). The ring-leader was a merchant and father of seven. When these men were arrested they did not deny that they had participated but said that they were happy at the outcome as the little boy was the child of sin. The longest sentence given to any of these conspirators was ten years in prison. This (as in the United States, where we see similar disparities) was in stark contrast to the sentence given to a woman who killed her abusive husband at roughly the same time as the Ouargla attack. This woman was sentenced to death, and only after much pressure from women's organizations was her death sentence commuted.

Khalida Messaoudi stressed to me that fundamentalist violence against women is part of political repression, rather than cultural repression which can be explained inherently by "Islam" itself. This distinction between "cultural" and "political" rights and rights violations is interesting. While it has been disputed by some, I think it illustrates several key points: (1) Feminist activists must often struggle to get the issues around which they work taken seriously at the international level, as such issues are sometimes dismissed as "cultural,"

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meaning inherent, static or, at worst, unchangeable; (2) Muslim fundamentalism in the Algerian context is understood by its Algerian critics (including its feminist critics) to be a political rather than a religious issue. Thus the conflict is not between "the religious" and "the secular," but is rather a political struggle among Muslims over the political uses and interpretations of their religion, and over power.

Messaoudi also underscored that the Ouargla attack and other assaults on women occurred long prior to the canceled January 1992 elections, which are used by those who ignore the previous violence against women to "explain" the violent acts of fundamentalists. Yet because women's rights have not been accepted as a key component of "human rights," by either those in official Algerian circles or the international human rights movement, this information has been disappeared.

Algerian women have not been passive victims of these attacks and agendas. As during the nationalist struggle against France, when women played key roles, displaying their bravery and ingenuity, many Algerian women today have organized to confront the attacks on their rights, and used strategies of daily resistance to combat the fundamentalist platform. They have formed over thirty women's organizations, and played an active role in a panoply of non-governmental organizations around issues such as torture that multiplied in the wake of the October 1988 repression.[7] Women intellectuals continue to research and publish on the status of women, a project which is becoming more dangerous.

Furthermore, women have been very active in the popular movement against fundamentalist violence, taking part in large numbers in the many demonstrations across the country. The largest of these public protests occurred on March 22, 1993, when hundreds of thousands marched in the streets in horror at the fundamentalist murders of a doctor and a former minister of education, and again one year later on March 22, 1994, when a huge number of Algerians protested the ongoing violence which has now claimed between 3,000

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and 7,000 lives in just three years. During the 1994 demonstration, I was struck by the image of an unveiled woman carrying a sign which simply said, "We will not yield." There have also always been large numbers of women in the funeral processions for slain intellectuals, a particular target of the armed groups.[8]

Algerian women have also contributed to the struggle against fundamentalism and repression by continuing to be productive members of society, despite the obstacles they face. Most young women do not veil, which one notices while driving through the streets, and many who once wore the *hijab* at the zenith of legal FIS power in the early 1990s have stopped doing so. Wearing blue jeans has become an act of defiance, as has wearing one's hair short or remaining single. Simply going to work has become a life-threatening activity for many women. A young researcher who works for the Center for the Study of Professional Formation and lives in a *quartier populaire*, or working-class area, told me of how she has to be careful when leaving her home to go to work. She must often take a taxi, which she can barely afford, to avoid waiting at the bus stop, and she can no longer leave early for fear of being alone on the street at the wrong time. Of course, the wrong time can come at any time, as it did for two little girls in her neighborhood who were run over and killed by the getaway car of fundamentalists leaving the scene of a shooting in February. By continuing to work, walk on the streets, and choose their own style of dress, today many Algerian women continue to do "daily battle."

While all women have been the targets of FIS rhetoric and armed group assaults, none are so hated and reviled as the women activists. FIS leader Abassi Medani called them "one of the most serious dangers menacing Algeria" and "the purveyors of neocolonialism and the avant-garde of cultural oppression." As the women's groups have worked to abolish Algeria's 1984 Family Code which legalizes polygamy, allowing men to marry up to four wives, the FIS newspaper coined the phrase "the women who want to marry four husbands" to

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refer to women activists who protested outside the National Assembly in opposition to this code. This level of misunderstanding and venom epitomizes the FIS attitude, an attitude of which the armed attacks by paramilitary groups is but the logical conclusion.

Most painfully, feminists have been attacked and called *hizb Franca* (the party of France) in an attempt to discredit them by associating their movement with the brutal colonial past.[9] This is highly ironic for numerous reasons, not least of which because many of the fundamentalist terrorists (at least 600-800) are veterans of the war in Afghanistan and were provided with military training by the CIA, and thus are themselves *hizb America* (party of America). In contrast, many of the women activists who worked against the Family Code also opposed the Gulf War and what they saw as the "pro-Western" economic policies of the Chadli Benjedid government, which ruled Algeria throughout the 1980s and colluded with the fundamentalist movement.

In closing, I urge all observers of the Algerian crisis to look at the experiences of women when attempting to understand what is happening in Algeria today and in determining just what is at stake in the struggle against armed fundamentalism. As an Algerian sociologist suggested, if Algerian fundamentalists have carried out this level of violence against women while struggling for power, one can but imagine the possible level of brutality to be enacted if these forces were to come to power. This is the reality which is, in part, obscured by omitting the deep-rooted anti-women agenda of the fundamentalist groups in Algeria from any examination of the current "Algerian drama." As a young Algerian woman researcher stressed to me when I visited her in February 1994, "Americans must learn about what is happening here before they judge if the rights of the fundamentalists are the ones really being violated. They must learn what the fundamentalists have done, the level of their propaganda against women—even in mosques."

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The struggle against fundamentalism and fundamentalist violence in Algeria is deserving of, and in need of, support and international solidarity. The odd cultural relativism with which some leftists and some feminists in the West have decided that by questioning and opposing fundamentalism, Algerian women lose their "indigenous" status or become "Westernized" and thus not "authentic" is deeply disturbing and is a new type of racism. Such analysis also displays a remarkable lack of understanding of the situation as well as a lack of principle. As the CIA trained many of the killers in the fundamentalist armed groups, the attacks on Algerian women and others should be of particularly urgent concern to the U.S. left.

Based on my discussions with a wide range of women during my visits to Algeria in 1992, 1993, and February 1994, I have observed that many Algerian women believe in the key significance of their own situation. They see it as crucial to determining the outcome of the current crisis, understanding that, in the words of the Algerian writer Aicha Lemsine, "women are now the stake and symbol for the future course of Algeria. Changes in their status will signal the direction for Algeria's future: Islamic state or modern society."

NOTES

1. I have chosen to use the word "fundamentalist" to refer to the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), and the Armed Islamic Movement (MIA), despite the debate over the appropriateness of this term. The term "Islamist" is often used instead to refer to these and other movements which seek to establish rule based on their own "literal" interpretation of the *Sharia*, and the abrogation of all civil law believed to be in contradiction with this interpretation. However, I question the use of the term "Islamist" as well as its connotations. As an Algerian woman writer asked, "Is David Koresh referred to as a Christianist?" In her view, the term "Islamist" implies that there is something particularly Islamic about these movements, and that they capture some "true" essence of the Muslim religion. She was not willing to concede these points, nor am I. Furthermore, the use of the term "fundamentalist" places such movements within the

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international context of fundamentalism in other major religions, which, although each determined by specific material and political contexts, share a certain present historical moment.

2. The report to which she referred is entitled *Human Rights in Algeria: No One Is Spared*, January 1994. It is ironic that despite the title's seeming reference to pervasive rights abuses, "no one" seems to exclude women, who are virtually unmentioned in the report.
3. The MIA and the GIA are the two major fundamentalist armed groups in Algeria who claim to be fighting against the government for the establishment of what they call "an Islamic state" in Algeria. The MIA is believed to be close to the former Islamic Salvation Front, the fundamentalist political party which enjoyed some electoral success before it was banned in 1992. It is reported to have committed relatively fewer heinous crimes given the older age of its fighters and the fact that many of them are veterans of the Popular National Army. Still, this group has killed many intellectuals and low-level government officials. The brutal violence of the GIA is notorious. Many of its members are young and are veterans of the war in Afghanistan, where they volunteered to fight in the *jihad* against the Soviet Union. Consequently, many of them received very sophisticated training from the CIA in camps in Pakistan. They now employ this training to slaughter professors, journalists, other intellectuals, women, and those who they see as "enemies of Islam" or whose deaths they believe will further destabilize Algeria. Currently, the MIA and GIA are also believed to be fighting each other.
4. This caused shock waves among other interfaith couples (particularly couples in which the woman is Muslim and the man is non-Muslim) in Algeria. I know of at least one such couple who felt forced to emigrate. Ironically, the so-called non-Muslim man in this couple is, in fact, the son of prominent FLN activists who fought on the nationalist Algerian side during the war with France. But, in the fundamentalist world-view, identity becomes reduced to the most meaningless possible categories which are rigidly defined, and such credentials are irrelevant. This is clearly shown in the fundamentalist murder of a man of Spanish descent who stayed in Algeria after the war and ran a famous bookstore near the University of Algiers. He was renowned for his love of Algeria and passionate promotion of Algerian culture and literature. He was, however, shot in the head in his store as a "foreigner" a week after being interviewed on French television and denouncing a French journalist who suggested that he should leave Algeria. He had said, "I love my country. Even if they throw me into the sea, I will swim back." The very idea of what it means to be Algerian is at stake.
5. On October 5, 1988, mass rioting broke out in the city of Algiers, spreading across the country. Between 300 and 700 people were killed in five bloody days. Mass arrests were made and for the first time in independent Algeria, widespread state-sponsored torture was reported. The Western media portrayed this as a struggle for "democracy," read to mean multiparty elections, but the actual demands expressed by the rioters were socioeconomic. Outside the Ministry of commerce, demonstrating youth wrote graffiti which said, "We elected Ali Baba, but not the Forty Thieves!" Instead of addressing these bread-and-butter issues, the government responded by offering further civil and political reforms, legalizing opposition political parties, setting up a timetable for multiparty elections, and liberalizing

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restrictions on the press. While these are inherently positive developments in the abstract, given the Algerian economic crisis, they functioned only as a formalist fig-leaf, diverting attention away from the actions of the government. The "reforms" also provided the perfect atmosphere within which the fundamentalist movement could flourish with a stamp of legality.

6. Under Article 52 of the Family Code, if there is only one domicile in the case of divorce, it goes automatically to the husband, and the woman and children can be left homeless. Given women's economic dependence and the terrible housing crisis in Algeria, this leaves the abandoned wife in a desperate position. It is not unusual to see such women begging on the streets of Algiers. The Algerian newspaper *Horizons* published the following testimony of a woman in such circumstances: "After 26 years of married life during which I made great sacrifices for my children, sacrificing my youth itself, I find myself, today, after the decision of my husband to make a new life with another woman, thrown out of my home with my children. Where will I go? I have nobody to turn to."
7. These groups include the Independent Association for the Triumph of Women's Rights, the Association for the Defense and Promotion of Women's Rights, the Association for Equal Rights Before the Law, Women's Voice of Boumerdes, and Tighri N'Tetouth, a Berberist women's group. There is also the official Union Nationale des Femmes Algeriennes (UNFA), which broke with the FLN party in 1992.
8. The martyred intellectuals have included noted psychiatrist Dr. Mahfoud Boucebci, known for his work on psychiatry and development and on the difficulties facing unwed mothers; Mohammed Boukhobza, sociologist and director of a research center in Algiers; Tahar Djaout, journalist and editor of the newspaper *Ruptures*; Abdelhammid Benmenni, editor of *Algerie Actualité*; and Rabah Zenati, a journalist with Algerian national television. Dr. Djillali Belkhenchir, Algeria's leading pediatric diabetes specialist; Alloula, the most famous Algerian playwright of the postcolonial period; Djillali Liabes, the former minister of education; Dr. Flici, who ran a popular clinic in the Casbah; Salah Djebaili, the rector of the University of Algiers Science Division at Babezzouar; Ahmed Asselah, director of the Algiers school of fine arts; and others have also paid with their lives. Assassination attempts have been made against countless other journalists, teachers, T.V. producers, judges, and low-level government officials. The loss of this group of talented and irreplaceable Algerians has left countless numbers of their fellow citizens heartbroken and fearful of the future. The intellectuals were killed for the same reasons as their Algerian sisters discussed in this article: because the way they chose to live their lives and do their work threatened the fundamentalist agenda. These people taught, healed, informed, amused, and communicated. They could dare to question both the Algerian government and its fundamentalist opponents and could conceive of a better future for the Algerian people.
9. This is, in part, the result of the terrible misuse of the issue of the "emancipation of the Muslim woman" by French colonial authorities as a divide-and-rule strategy and as a way of judging Algerian indigenous culture as "regressive" and "inferior" and thus "deserving" of domination. For a discussion of this phenomenon, see Frantz Fanon, "Algeria Unveiled" in *Studies in a Dying Colonialism*, 1965.

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POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT: TOWARD A SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENDA

by ASOKA BANDARAGE

Rapid population growth in the world today is not simply attributable to ignorance, irrationality, and apathy of the poor or their lack of access to contraceptives. The fundamental reasons for population growth in the South and population decline in the North (apart from immigration from the South) lie in the evolution of industrial capitalism and Western imperialism. Contemporary international migration also has its origins in these historical developments.

During the early stages of imperialism, the European population "exploded across the face of the earth" while natives, especially tribal peoples, experienced massive depopulation.[1] Of the millions of slaves taken out of Africa, only a small proportion survived to reach North America. Approximately 50 million tribal people were wiped out due to conquest and the spread of new diseases by European colonizers during the 1780-1930 period.[2]

Tribal depopulation has continued apace due to the war, poverty, and disease that have accompanied Western demographic, politico-economic, and cultural expansion over the past five hundred years. For many Native American and other indigenous people, the primary issue continues to be survival,

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not population control. Understandably, then, when sterilization, experimental contraceptives, and so on are pushed on native women, they see it as a form of genocide.

Unequal Population Dynamics

Appropriation of wealth from the colonies laid the basis for the Industrial Revolution and improvements in general standards of living in the imperialist countries. In the West, the demographic transition from large to small families was achieved first among the middle classes, which absorbed the greater measure of benefits from imperialism and the Industrial Revolution. Among the working classes, which bore many of the detrimental effects of these forces, the demographic transition was not achieved until well into the second half of the nineteenth century and even later. The shift from labor-intensive agricultural to less labor-intensive industrial production, improved wages, legislation against child labor, reduction of child mortality, mandatory schooling for children, and wage employment of women were among the factors contributing to a reduction of births among the working classes.[3]

The demographic transition achieved in the West could not be repeated in the colonies due to a wholly different trajectory of socioeconomic evolution. As Barry Commoner has pointed out, the demographic transition in the imperialist countries involved a kind of "demographic parasitism" in that the second "population balancing phase of the demographic transition in the [economically and militarily] advanced country . . . [was] fed by the suppression of that same phase in the colony . . . ."[4] In other words, the exploitative relationship between the metropolitan and colonial countries resulted in different demographic dynamics in the two regions.

Production and Reproduction Under Colonialism

The extractive operations introduced into the colonies, such as plantation agriculture and mining, required large

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supplies of labor. Starting from the early years of merchant capitalism, European overseas investors and colonizers were hampered by labor shortages, that is, a crisis of underpopulation rather than overpopulation. When native people refused to abandon subsistence production and traditional life styles to work for the Europeans, the Europeans resorted to the African slave trade and indentured labor from Asia and Europe.

Colonial state policies encouraged pronatalism, for example, equating the social status of African slave women with "breeding power." But high fertility may well have been slave women's response to high mortality rather than obedience to slaveholders' demands. On the other hand, at least some colonized women in the Americas and Africa are known to have engaged in "birth strikes," refusing to produce children for the hated colonial enterprise.[5] In the long run, however, the interests of colonial capitalism prevailed over the interests of the masses of subjugated people. The new private property rights and monocultural export agriculture robbed people of their lands and natural resources; colonial taxation policies and the new market needs forced many to neglect or abandon subsistence production and become wage laborers or migrate to distant lands seeking employment. For increasing numbers of people without other sources of survival in the expanding global market economy, labor became the only available commodity and survival mechanism.[6]

Colonial capitalism and the exploitation and poverty it created made large families a rational choice for most people. In the "internal colonies" within the United States too, black tenant farmers, for instance, responded with a similar reproductive rationality. They found that in order to survive they needed to cultivate more of the white man's land and to do so they needed large families.

The roads, communications, engineering, agricultural, and medical services introduced by the Europeans in their campaign to exploit natural resources initiated the first phase of the demographic transition in the colonies. Introduction

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of imported technologies of public health in particular led to a dramatic reduction of mortality rates. But due to the persistence of pronatalist norms, high infant mortality, and the new conditions of economic insecurity created by colonial capitalism, birth rates did not decline significantly. The result was a disruption in the pre-existing demographic equilibrium and rapid population expansion, particularly in the post-independence period. The demographic explosion in the Third World, then, is a product of contradictions within the twin forces of modern technology and capitalism. These forces brought down death rates through modern technology but they could not bring down birth rates because they increased social inequality and undermined the economic security and self-sufficiency of the masses.

Almost everywhere parents in lower economic classes tend to have more children than do middle-class parents. There are two primary reasons for this. First, in poor communities the marginal cost of raising an additional child is very little—certainly when compared with the exorbitant costs of raising a child at middle-class consumption levels in the North. Secondly, for poor people without other resources, children are often economic assets, not liabilities.

Unlike middle-class children, who remain dependent on their parents until adulthood, poor children in the Third World start to work at an early age. In rural communities children engage in a variety of unpaid as well as underpaid work, including agricultural field work, export craft production, domestic work, rearing of younger siblings, and so on. In urban slums, many families are dependent entirely on the labor of children working as vendors, beggars, thieves, and prostitutes. They must engage in such activities for lack of survival alternatives in the first place, and then their very labor keeps them from the schooling that might enable them to move beyond such poverty. It contributes to the intergenerational propagation of class status and the perpetuation of the cycle of poverty and high fertility.[7]

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Colonialism and the Subordination of Women

The relationship between poverty and fertility cannot be understood without looking at the economic and social subordination of women. Under colonial capitalism, men were favored for wage labor over women, and women's labor became increasingly marginalized as unpaid, invisible, domestic labor. Private property rights, education, and new technologies were given largely to men, although women continued to be central economic producers in most regions. Where women were absorbed into wage labor as field hands, maids, and so on, they were restricted to lower paid, lower status "women's work." Even when women became the primary breadwinners of families (for example, because of male unemployment or migration), they continued to be defined in colonial practice largely as dependent housewives and mothers. Christian proselytization and the Victorian morality of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries helped reinforce the sexual and social subordination of women.

Economic marginalization and deepening poverty have not allowed women to challenge patriarchal social relations. In the absence of improvements in women's economic and social status, children continue to be their primary source of social esteem as well as economic security and power.[8] Childless women, in particular women without sons, are ostracized and often abandoned by husbands in patriarchal cultures. The pressure to bear sons, coupled with high infant mortality rates, makes it rational for poor women to have many children. Under such conditions, many poor women see demands for fertility control, including economic incentives to accept sterilization, as a threat to their very social identity and well-being.

These observations have some validity for poor women in the North as well. For example, lack of access to abortion and contraception are not why teenage girls bear children in the United States. The causes of high teenage pregnancy in poor neighborhoods are largely rooted in economic and

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social structures that undermine self-esteem, hope, and upward mobility. As many analysts have shown, where poverty is the dominant factor in the lives of black teenage men and women, many choose to bear children as a way of expressing their adult status in a harsh and racist world that defines their sense of being.[9] Early childbearing and the burdens of childrearing, whether among whites or people of color, prevent young parents from furthering their education and improving their lives. As in the Third World, it often leads to the intergenerational transmission of poverty and a continuation of the mutually reinforcing cycle of poverty and high fertility.

Population control advocates are not entirely wrong when they point out that many poor women do not have access to reliable contraceptives, and that they would like to use them, in some cases regardless of the disapproval of their boy friends and husbands. But historical evidence from the West as well as other regions has shown repeatedly that for family planning and contraceptives to be accepted and used, social conditions compatible with low fertility must exist. Voluntary family planning has succeeded only in societies where economic security has been improved for the general population and for women in particular, including access to material resources, health, and education.

Social Justice and Fertility

The dominant capitalist development model assumes that social improvements can come about only as a result of rapid economic growth. However, even in Europe and such countries as South Korea and Taiwan, economic growth alone was not sufficient to improve general living standards. State intervention in the provision of universal education and health care and in some cases land reform were vital for improving living standards and lowering birth rates.

Frances Moore Lappé and Rachel Schurman have observed that by the 1980-1985 period, among the more than seventy poor countries in the world, only six—China, Sri Lanka, Colombia, Chile, Burma, and Cuba—and the state of

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Kerala in India had managed to cut their total fertility rates by a third and reduce population growth rates to less that 2 percent annually. Yet unlike the European countries and East Asian newly industrialized "success" economies that had experienced the demographic transition to low birth rates, these six and Kerala did not have very high levels of economic growth, per capita incomes, industrialization, or urbanization. Neither did they have strong family planning programs in common.

What China (prior to 1979 modernization and one child family policy), Sri Lanka, Colombia, Chile, Burma, Cuba, and Kerala did have in common were guarantees of basic necessities, especially access to sufficient food. Four of the seven (China, Sri Lanka, Cuba, and Kerala) provided more extensive food guarantees than any other Third World countries.[10] These examples suggest that what is most essential for poverty alleviation and declining birth rates is not overall economic growth but rather equitable income distribution, the reduction of economic inequality, and improvements in women's lives.

In Sri Lanka, benefits provided by the social welfare state, such as universal education, health care, and food subsidies, helped to improve the quality of life and lower mortality and birth rates, despite low per capita incomes and low economic growth rates (prior to economic liberalization in 1977). The high rate of women's literacy, 84 percent, and the delayed age of marriage, nearly twenty-five years for women on average in 1981, are indeed unusual in an economically poor country, as is also women's low fertility rate of only 2.5 children for the 1990-1995 period.[11]

The demographic transition in Kerala is even more instructive because it stands in sharp contrast to the rest of India. Despite large-scale programs of population stabilization conducted by the Indian government over several decades using conventional Western approaches to family planning, the annual population growth rate in India has averaged 2.1 percent during the last forty or so years. While Kerala's pop-

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ulation density is three times the Indian average and for many decades Kerala has been considered among the most "backward" and "overpopulated" of Indian states, within an astonishingly short time span both Kerala's mortality and fertility rates declined. Thus, Kerala's annual population growth rate went from 2.26 in 1971 to 1.74 in 1981.[12]

The demographic transition in Kerala was not the achievement of stringent population control. Rather, it was the result of structural reforms that reduced social and economic disparities. Transfer of resources to the poorest groups occurred through such mechanisms as abolition of tenancy through land reform, enforcement of child labor and minimum wage laws, widespread health facilities, pension funds, universal education, public work programs, expansion of agricultural labor unions, and a minimum food-grain distribution system. All have contributed to Kerala's successful demographic transition. These reforms led to overall improvements in the quality of life index—reduced infant mortality, longer life expectancy, higher literacy. When mortality levels fell, and when the value of children as an economic asset declined across the social spectrum, even some of the poorest landless laborers became "amenable to family planning."[13]

The fertility decline in Kerala must also be seen in relation to the relatively high status of women, a fact visible in the relatively longer lifer expectancy of girls and women over boys and men (the human biological norm). Among Indian states, Kerala's sex ratio of 97 males per 100 females is exceptionally favorable to women over men. Although Kerala's matrilineal traditions have weakened in recent years, they have nevertheless been important in giving Kerala's women a relatively high social status. Recent social reforms in Kerala have been particularly beneficial to women. They have increased women's educational levels, labor force participation, and age at marriage, which is the highest of any state in India. Fully 22 percent of Kerala women never marry, apparently "because of attractive alternatives to marriage available to educated females."[14]

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The Kerala success is not simply the result of top-down action from a benevolent leftist state. Without grassroots mobilization and continued pressure by peasant and labor groups, the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) and its allies would have been unable to initiate and successfully carry out land reform, minimum wage, child labor, and similar progressive legislation. Even when the CPI-M was out of power, it was able to influence the continuation of the social welfare policies due to its popularity with the poor. In Sri Lanka too, the welfare state was the product of very high levels of popular participation in electoral politics, as well as the historical strength of the Marxist parties.

The welfare state is not a panacea for all social problems or women's concerns. Certainly the Kerala and Sri Lankan models have not been perfect. The lessons of these cases, however, is that if reduction of population growth rates is a priority, then social structural changes are essential. Social equity concerns must take priority over aggregate growth concerns, and human needs must come before the "needs" of externally imposed family planning and other institutional structures.

Although the rhetoric of "basic needs," "human development," "women's rights," "sustainability," and so on have been incorporated in documents of the dominant world institutions, these same institutions have been vigorously blocking efforts toward social justice and democracy. The World Bank, for instance, has consistently opposed income redistribution even when some of its own studies have shown that increases in income are correlated with lower fertility.[15] Studies from Bangladesh and other areas have shown that one of the central questions guiding the population control enterprise is, "Can family planning programs . . . succeed without extensive socioeconomic development?"[16] Population control is increasingly promoted as a substitute for income and wealth redistribution in the face of worsening global inequality.

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Conclusion

Neither the population issue nor the broader political-economic crisis that it represents can be resolved by increased funding for family planning programs and quick-fix contraceptives. Poverty alleviation and the economic empowerment of women must be the cornerstone of population policy. To eradicate poverty and to reduce economic inequality, however, we must move away from the capitalist, competitive, "growth first" model toward a new model of development that places the survival of humans and the environment before the needs of corporate profitability and technological advancement. We need sustainable and democratic models of development that honor social and ecological principles, themselves based on the fundamental ethical given of the essential oneness and equality of all human beings.

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10. Lappé and Schurman, *The Missing Piece*, pp. 55-63.

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11. Asoka Bandarage, "Women and Capitalist Development in Sri Lanka, 1977-1987," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 20, no.2 (1988): 77-78; John Caldwell, Indra Gajanayake, Bruce Caldwell, and Pat Caldwell, "Is Marriage Delay a Multiphasic Response to Pressures for Fertility Decline? The Case of Sri Lanka," *The Journal of Marriage and the Family* 51, no.2 (May 1989).
12. John Ratcliffe, "Social Justice and the Demographic Transition from India's Kerala State," *International Journal of Health Services* 8, no. 1 (1978); *Economic and Political Weekly*, 14 November 1992.
13. Joan Mencher, "The Lessons and Non-Lessons of Kerala: Agricultural Labourers and Poverty," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Special Number, October 1980, p.139.
14. Ratcliffe, "Social Justice," p.139.
15. World Bank, *World Development Report 1984*, p.109.
16. Cited in Betsy Hartmann and Hilary Standing, *The Poverty of Population Control: Family Planning and Health Policy in Bangladesh* (London: Bangladesh International Action Group, 1989), p.67.

(*Continued from inside back cover*)
goes to the totally health-care-functionless insurance companies. The advantages of the single-payer system for the great majority of health-care users have been demonstrated by the Canadian experience and are so obvious to well-informed people that public-opinion polls in the last few years have consistently shown a two-thirds to three-quarters majority in favor of it in the United States. It was therefore widely assumed that this would become the centerpiece of the struggle over health-care that Clinton had initiated: the Clinton plan versus single-payer, with all the conservative, corporate, pro-capital forces on one side, the people on the other.

This did not happen, for complicated reasons that need to be carefully investigated and explained. Here we can only point to the most obvious: single-payer never developed effective organization and leadership; the Clinton administration's argument that it was politically unfeasible proved remarkably effective; above all, the mass media, completely dominated by capital, successfully blacked out all information and discussion relating to single-payer, with the result that for large sections of the public it became (or remained) a non-issue. Once it became clear that no serious problems of substance or principle were involved in the health-care struggle, matters took a new and unexpected turn. The Republicans, with nothing to fear by way of capital-threatening reform, could turn their attention to inflicting a humiliating defeat on the Clinton administration and the Democrats generally. Clinton's promise, made with such a grandiose rhetorical flourish hardly more than a year ago, is no more. Universal coverage now seems to mean (maybe) 95 percent by 2002. The Republicans, led by a solidly reactionary Congressional leadership, smell blood and are going for the kill.

This is where matters stand in early August as the Congress prepares to go home for its summer vacation. The health-care bills now being prepared for action in the House and the Senate represent a total reneging on the

(*Continued on page 25.*)

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REMEMBERING RALPH MILIBAND

by JOEL KOVEL

The death of Ralph Miliband after a long suffering deprives the socialist world of one of its leading voices. A bastion of integrity, of intellectual power and moral intensity, of lucidity, of hope and eloquence has been taken down. The loss to those who knew and loved him is incalculable; so, too, is the loss to his students, to the *Socialist Register* he guided so brilliantly, and to those other radical causes to which he gave himself.

I did not know Ralph well, but as I had the opportunity once of publishing an essay-review of his *Marxism and Politics* and *Class Power and State Power* in this journal,[1] I should like to contribute to his remembrance with some reflections on the overall significance of his thought. What follows is impressionistic, not systematic. To me, Ralph Miliband was the exemplar of the socialist intellectual, and that impression is the theme of these remarks.

What should a socialist intellectual be? A scholar, a person versed in the Marxist texts and able to apply them to the real world? No doubt, and Miliband was surely this. An elegant writer and speaker, able to convey complex and subtle ideas in non-mystifying language? Miliband was certainly this, too. A fighter for justice, for the poor and forgotten, and a

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principled antagonist of the ruling elites? Miliband fit this description as well.

But while all of the above makes one a socialist intellectual, and even a good or great one depending upon the qualities of mind and heart evinced in the work and the fight, there is another level yet that Ralph Miliband achieved and which makes his loss all the more keen. Miliband spoke for socialism as such. He addressed a great number of concrete subjects during the course of his long career, yet always in the larger context of affirming socialism—its possibility, superiority, and, critically, the paths open to achieving it.

He did so with an extraordinary resoluteness, a kind of stubborn and even courageous insistence upon the viability and relevance of Marx's thought. In practical terms, this meant insisting upon the centrality of class struggle. There are of course many facets to Marxism, from deep philosophical presuppositions such as materialism or dialectics to a particular political/economic analysis of current events. But class struggle is the conceptual linchpin inasmuch as it is here that Marxists and socialists have to *fight* for the truth they believe in.

And Ralph Miliband fought an intellectual war for decades, tracking down the "beast" of class struggle, showing its various forms and taking it on where he found it. This is seen particularly clearly in two of his books: his most influential work, *The State in Capitalist Society,* published in 1969, and in his *Divided Societies,* published twenty years later.[2]

The State in Capitalist Society is an extended demonstration of Marx and Engels' proposition that the government of capitalist society is the executive committee of the whole ruling class. The work begins portentously, with the somber observation that "More than ever before men now live in the shadow of the state." We are reminded however of more than the scale of the state. The passage also harkens back to the opening lines of the *Communist Manifesto,* that a "spectre" of communism is haunting Europe—with the profound difference, however, that then a relatively weak central authority

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confronted the rising giant of labor, while now a behemoth state looms over labor, indeed over all of society.

The fact that Marx erred in overestimating the fighting chances of an industrial proletariat has been endlessly reiterated as proof that there is something fundamentally wrong with Marxism It is rarely appreciated that the mistake stemmed not from inherent errors in Marx's method but from the inherent difficulty of extrapolating from a moving platform. Marxism is first of all the concrete study of capitalism. But capitalism evolves, and while it is both understandable and essential to make predictions, as Marx did, based upon where he stood at a given time, Marxism itself establishes the likelihood of those predictions being mistaken.

As James O'Connor has written, what Marx saw and thematized was the coming to power of the capitalist *economy* as installed in the factory system. What we are seeing, and have to thematize, is the maturation of capitalist *society*, with penetration of capitalist relations into all spheres of life.[3] The workers of Marx's day struggled against a capitalist economy that nested, so to speak, in a precapitalist society with many communitarian values. This provided a matrix from which to rebel. Today's workers embedded in capitalist society are surrounded by capitalism. It defines their horizon. They can see no alternative, and remain quiescent.

The "state in capitalist society" is the capitalist state; it is what has happened to the state—and society—in the one hundred and more years since Marx stopped observing the trajectory of capitalism. Miliband took it upon himself to bear witness to the monsters capitalist society had wrought; he made the dissection of the capitalist state his calling.

I observed above that there was courage in doing so—just as it took courage for Marx to do what he did. But the rules of the game have changed. Karl Marx faced direct police repression as well as debilitating poverty for telling capitalism the truth about itself. For doing the same a century later, Ralph Miliband was not hounded from country to country by the police, but was allowed to pursue a distinguished trans-

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atlantic academic career. His courage lay in a different direction. It amounts to having the strength of character and intellectual fortitude to stand up to the consensus capitalist society had produced—that stifling liberalism whose ground is the seeming inevitability of the reigning mode of production. Such an attitude has become sedimented into an article of faith as much for the intelligentsia as for the elites and masses. A confident capitalism can permit critics as relentless and gifted as Miliband their place, secure in the knowledge that the majority of ears have already been stopped to his message. Antonio Gramsci, another great theoretician of the transition, spoke of the process as "hegemony." It consists of so constituting civil society and the state that alternatives to capitalism cannot be taken seriously. As Miliband observed in reflecting upon hegemony, while Gramsci may have considered its essence to be getting people to love Big Brother Capital, the more prevalent current form would have us accept capitalism simply because alternatives are made to seem far worse or at most quixotic. The instilling of resignation is a great triumph for capital, especially as this saps the resolve of intellectuals and leads them to betray their obligation. After all, intellectuals are a privileged class, who generally live soft lives thanks to the toil of others. The least they can do to redeem themselves is to see through the existing order and give hope for a future worthy of humanity. That intellectuals have so largely sold out their critical responsibilities is one of the great moral disasters of our time. Conversely, it defines the courage of a Ralph Miliband.

It follows that Miliband would enunciate his practice as "counter hegemonic struggle."[4] The concept of hegemony derives logically from the development of capitalist economy into capitalist society; fidelity to it demands that an anticapitalist vision see all aspects of society. This was the charge Miliband assumed in his last published book, *Divided Societies*.[5] Here Miliband updates his theory of the capitalist state with, among other dimensions, a sharper look at the strategies of repression and ideology, including the master doctrine of the

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ruling elites, anticommunism.[6] And he expands his theory with an examination of the state's putative antagonists, called "class struggle from below." Miliband had for his entire career been a powerful opponent of Stalinism, and he saw little to mourn in the passing of the Soviet system. But his criticism of social democracy is no less trenchant and, given the current alignment of forces, more consequential.

It is a harsh view, tempered only by a courtly style and rooted in his profound grasp of the nature of a mature capitalist state. Miliband saw the innumerable betrayals by social democracy of revolutionary ideals, up to and including the collapse of such left opposition as had been signified by the French Socialists and the British Labour Party, as inherent in the workings of bourgeois democracy itself.

Social democratic leaders often proclaimed that they wanted much more than specific remedies for specific problems: nothing less, in fact, than the creation of a new social order based on equality, justice, fairness, compassion, cooperation, and so forth. Such a vision, however, was perfectly compatible with the concentration on the piecemeal, gradual, "incremental" reforms whose pursuit bourgeois democracy encouraged. Indeed, the vision was also compatible with a fierce opposition to all strategies, proposals, and struggles designed to advance the radical transformation of the social order and to bring nearer the realization of the vision, on the ground that the strategies were self-defeating, dangerous, and irresponsible, that the policies were unrealistic, inopportune, or misconceived, that they would not only fail to achieve their aims, but place in jeopardy much that had already been achieved. There has never been a dearth of such arguments, which helped to turn social democratic leaders and their supporters into the scourge of their radical critics, and which enabled them to do so with a very good conscience.

Bourgeois democracy greatly fosters "moderation," both in trade union leaders and in parliamentarians of social democratic disposition. The system functions by means of a considerable measure of collaboration between opponents who

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are colleagues as well as adversaries. A process of "natural" or "functional" selection is here at work. To begin with, the system attracts people who are in any case of "moderate" disposition; and for those who are not, there is an immensely powerful pull toward the development of such a disposition. For those who submit to it, there are advancement, praise, honor; for those who resist it, there is denunciation, often of great virulence, from a multitude of sources. For "people who aspire to a role of leadership in the labour movement, the lure of 'moderation' is unquestionably very strong; it is often resisted, of course, but at a considerable cost."(77)

The next time you see the word "moderate" used in a praiseworthy sense—which is more or less to say, the next time your pick up a mainstream newspaper—think of Ralph Miliband.

If Miliband was hostile toward social democrats, his view with respect to "new social movements"—feminism, anti-racism, ecology, peace and disarmament, student movements and those for sexual liberation—was distinctly more supportive. He takes to task those of his fellow socialists who regard these movements as distractions from the "real" struggle. Miliband recognized that the new social movements sprang from real sources within capitalist society and could not be scolded away. One had to appreciate the actual complexity of society and the scale of the penetration and diffusion of capitalist relations which had brought forward these new foci of resistance. For better or worse, the new social movements have become the conduits through which a considerable portion of the energy of the dialectic is currently expressed. The point therefore is not to downplay the new social movements but to convince them that the fulfillment of their own emancipatory needs lies in the overcoming of capitalism and not reforms within capitalism. And if this is the case, then alliances must be forged between movements of labor and those of social transformation. In these alliances, it may be said that all sides will have to modify their position. But in any case:

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It must, however, be said that labour movements will remain at the core of the struggle for radical reform and revolutionary change in advanced capitalist societies. New social movements may doubt this or deny it. But all conservative forces in these societies do not doubt it. For them, the main antagonist, as always, remains organized labour and the socialist Left: it is they who must above all be contained, repelled, and, if need be, crushed.(114)

A grim but essential criterion: if you are serious about social transformation, seek out what the ruling class will not tolerate, then organize around it. The bourgeoisie has little trouble in accepting bourgeois feminism, civil rights, environmentalism, or gay liberation—that is, any of the new social movements so long as they do not threaten accumulation. It is, therefore, a *socialist* women's liberation, *socialist* black liberation, *socialist* gay liberation, and *socialist* green movement (i.e., a "red-green" movement, probably the most strategic of all the new possibilities), in alliance with a socialist workers' movement, that has to face the heat and carry the day. It will be a coalition, but one "with a core, a solid centre; and this would have to be provided by the representatives of a socialist party able to exercise a major influence on the coalition, without any presumption of a privileged position."(229)

And the chances for such a day? To the end, Miliband refused the cowardly resignation of socialist hope in the face of the tremendous counterrevolutionary thrust of our time. He looked ahead to a day when a "partnership" would develop between a democratic socialist state on the one side and movements of popular social power on the other. In this way the necessary strong functions of a state charged with the supervision of a transition away from capitalism could be preserved without the state degenerating into an all-powerful instrument over society.

Utopian? No doubt at some level. But any political project requires the affirmation of something that is not there, something, in short, imagined. The old choice, socialism or barbarism, is still before us, even if barbarism now comes

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dressed in the clothes of a degraded and plundered environment, with famine and pestilence for the majority of the world and refined brutality for the metropolis. Faced with this choice, Miliband opted, in his courageous, measured way, for the slow and patient building of a socialist alternative worthy of the name.

I will remember Ralph best at the fortieth anniversary celebration of *Monthly Review*. In praising the work of Paul Sweezy and Harry Magdoff, he likened them to the French *philosophes* of the eighteenth century whose steady chipping away at the foundations of the *ancien régime* so weakened that structure that when its moment of confrontation with the forced arrayed against it came, it crashed virtually all at once to the ground. The image was dazzling, the kind that could give hope in dark times by suddenly illuminating the present with the past and placing the moment of our despair in the perspective of history. Who besides Ralph Miliband would have the authority to pass such a judgment? And now as we mourn his passing, we can see how superbly it applied to him as well.

NOTES

1. "Class, Power, and the State," *Monthly Review* 37, no. 8 (January 1986): 23-38.
2. *The State in Capitalist Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1969); *Divided Societies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).
3. James O'Conner, "A Red Green Politics in the United States?" *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 5, no. 1 (March 1994): 1-19.
4. This is the title of Miliband's contribution to the 1990 *Socialist Register*, appropriately titled, "The Retreat of the Intellectuals" (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), pp. 346-365.
5. We await the appearance of a posthumous volume.
6. Miliband's interest in this peculiar phenomenon was most fully expressed in the 1984 *Socialist Register*, "The Uses of Anti-Communism." I should add that this study—in particular Miliband's essay (with Marcel Liebman), "Reflections on Anti-Communism," pp.1-23—was highly influential in turning my attention to the subject.

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Breaking the Mind-Forg'd Manacles

by J. Quinn Brisben

E.P. Thompson, *Witness Against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law.* New York: The New Press, 1993, xxi+234 pp. $30.00 cloth.

The first need of a revolutionary is a set of respectable ancestors. To break "the mind-forg'd manacles" which enslave us to state or church, economic despotism or lying media, we need hallowed slogans affirming our ancient rights, great tales of heroic vision and resistance, a precise and evocative language in which to express our anger and desire, the whole extent of that lovely oxymoron "revolutionary tradition." Many of us have sensed that William Blake, the very odd and very great poet, painter, and mystic of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was such an ancestor. By locating the protean Blake as precisely as possible within the amorphous and sometimes underground currents of prophetic dissent in his time and by outlining the confluence and clash of radical religious and political themes which form the argument of Blake's work, the last book of the late British historian E.P. Thompson has done the revolutionary tradition a considerable service.

J. Quinn Brisben is a retired Chicago high school teacher who was the 1992 presidential candidate of the Socialist Party USA. He wrote an article covering the disability rights movement which appeared in the November 1993 issue of Monthly Review.

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Thompson was the most seminal historian, Marxist or non-Marxist, of our generation in the English-speaking world. His 1955 biography of William Morris, revised in 1976, was a landmark in the study of the relationship of aesthetics to politics. His masterpiece, the 1963 *The Origins of the English Working Class*, which gives a detailed account of the political currents around William Blake in its opening section, gave historians on both sides of the Atlantic new tools for studying the history of groups previously considered unchronicled and voiceless. He interrupted his career as scholar and teacher in recent years to wage a trenchant campaign against the arms race. This final book, an expansion of the Alexander Lectures delivered at the University of Toronto in 1978, brings his remarkable career full circle. *Witness Against the Beast,* delayed by the exigencies of public affairs and failing health, was published just a few weeks before Thompson's death in August 1993.

The book was dedicated to David Erdman, author of *Blake: Prophet Against Empire* (1954, revised 1965, 1969, and 1977), and largely accepts Erdman's conclusions as to the origin and importance of Blake's radical political beliefs. This is not to say that either Thompson or Erdman consider Blake a proto-socialist. Indeed, they do not even go as far in that respect as the late Jacob Bronowski in his 1944 book *A Man Without a Mask.* Blake was a proud artisan, disdainful of patronage, defiant against repression, a dissenter from the doctrines of many establishments and sometimes astonishingly sane on the subject of women and sexuality, but the struggle for the control of the means of production was not at the center of his concerns. If Blake can be considered a forerunner of the socialists, his mystical and prophetic utterances are not logical or analytical, but might be considered socialist inspiration for the right side of the brain. Blake's vision, although strongly rooted in images of this world, was essentially religious. He scorned the doubting *philosophes* of the Enlightenment and filled his poetry and hand-colored engravings with symbols from the tradition of Christian mysticism.

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He was strongly influenced by the writings of Jacob Boehme and Emmanuel Swedenborg. However, Thompson makes a powerful case that he was much less influenced by the genteel tradition of neo-Platonist mysticism than by the legacy of the radical fringes of the Puritan Revolution, which was at its height a century before Blake's birth in 1757.

Thompson carefully traces the currents which flowed from sects like the Levellers, who believed in political equality, and the Ranters, who believed in sexual equality, all of whom represented the longings of common people who expressed their desire in religious language because they had no other vehicle for public discourse. Groups like these were forced underground after the Restoration in 1660, but they continued to develop and mutate. These groups were largely antinomian: that is, they believed that faith alone was necessary for salvation and that the saved were not bound by the conventional moral law, much less the laws made by what they considered illegitimate institutions. Such groups tended to have an antipathy toward ruling classes in state or church. They were frequently persecuted. Thompson does an admirable job of recovering their doctrines and symbols from the faint traces of the squabbling pamphlets and erratic congregational records of the age. His thesis is that Blake was strongly influenced by a group called the Muggletonians, who turn out to be a good deal less ridiculous than their name makes them sound.

These followers of Ludovic Muggleton and John Reeve, according to Thompson, "arose within the whitest heats of the vortex around which Ranting, Quakerism, egalitarian, Behmenist, and sexual liberationist notions turned. While they quarrelled most fiercely with their most proximate neighbors, as is the way of sects, a great deal of the imagery which turned in that vortex was gathered into their doctrine." It is a process familiar to many readers of this journal. The Muggletonians believed in "a singular God/Christ in the image of man"; numbered their followers only in the low three figures; wrote hymns to the tunes of popular ballads of the

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day, much in the manner of the IWW; and kept a low profile in comparison to the evangelicals of the day. Thompson makes a case that Blake's mother and members of her family were probably Muggletonians, but he goes no further in his surmise; he does not need to do so. Blake's vision was too large and constantly changing to be contained within the doctrines of any sect, but the source of his powerful symbols and peculiar notions is obviously in the neighborhood that Thompson has surveyed with such exemplary scholarship. Thompson's account of his discovery of the Muggletonian archive and its last believing custodian is quite touching.

Having pinpointed the sources of Blake's ever shifting mythological framework, Thompson goes on to analyze Blake's early masterpieces, *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, especially the poems "The Divine Image" and "The Human Abstract." These are enough to reaffirm that Blake speaks directly to the concerns of radical politics in both his time and our own, but it is regrettable that Thompson did not have time to continue his analysis to cover some of the later prophetic books like *Vala* or *The Four Zoas* or *Milton*, which is the source of the well-known hymn of the British Labour Party:

> And did those feet in ancient time
> Walk upon England's mountains green?
> And was the holy Lamb of God
> On England's pleasant pastures seen?
>
> And did the Countenance Divine
> Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
> And was Jerusalem builded here
> Among these dark Satanic Mills?
>
> Bring me my Bow of burning gold!
> Bring me my Arrows of desire!
> Bring me my Spear! O clouds unfold!
> Bring me my Chariot of Fire!
>
> I will not cease from Mental Fight,

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Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant Land.

This complex language sometimes defies analysis, but it is language from an unbroken tradition, immediately intelligible to the vast majority of working people in English-speaking countries, a manner of speaking familiar to Eugene Debs and Kate Richards O'Hare, Martin Luther King and Fannie Lou Hamer, indeed to every American radical and socialist with a real mass following in this century. This language of prophecy which has been the chief vehicle of mass protest throughout history is worth the careful study of even the most rational among us. It is not only a beautiful thing in itself but an essential tool for full communication. Thompson's closely reasoned study of Blake's heritage and his early poems is a good place to begin.

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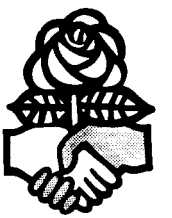

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(Continued from inside front cover)

of health-care, particularly, there was not even that. After the Second World War, the relative power of capital was fully restored, and the taking back of what concessions had recently been granted (especially in the areas of labor legislation and progressive taxation) soon began. The process was interrupted in the 1960s by two developments: opposition to the imperialist war in Vietnam and the Civil Rights movement, which combined to produce an incipient mass movement that for a time threatened to get out of hand, evoking the partial resumption of the concessions that had been initiated by the New Deal. These concessions now took two forms: the abolition of Jim Crow, the U.S. version of apartheid; and a number of social reforms, including medicare and medicaid, which could have been the beginning of a comprehensive health-care system in the United States. The concessions worked as intended. The wind was taken out of the incipient mass movement's sails, and the stage was set for capital to mount a new offensive in the ongoing class war. This, as it happened, coincided with a similar move by capital in the other advanced countries. Thatcher and Reagan, in that order, became symbols in capital's new global campaign to turn the clock back.

This has been going on for about a decade and a half now, with predictable consequences. Mass unemployment has returned on a scale not seen since the Great Depression. The distribution of wealth and income has been dramatically skewed in favor of the rich. Living standards of the underlying population have eroded, and the welfare state (or what remains of it) has come under attack everywhere. Opposition political parties (Social Democrats in Europe, Labour in Britain, Democrats in the United States) have caved in where they have not colluded. Effectively, capital has had its way; predictably, the people have suffered.

In the United States, health-care has been a notorius victim of these regressive tendencies, as many studies have shown; and certain structural changes—the rapid increase in women's participation in the labor force, the growth in the number of single-parent families, the rising percentage of children living in poverty—have combined to focus attention and concern on the deficiencies of the U.S. health-care system. Proposals for reform date back to FDR's 1944 Economic Bill of Rights and have surfaced from time to time ever since, with public-opinion polls consistently showing strong support for substantial reforms. Matters came to a head a couple of years ago when Harris Wofford, a Democratic candidate in a special Pennsylvania senatorial election, put health-care at the center of his campaign and handily defeated his Republican opponent, who had been the overwhelming favorite to win the election. Clinton took the cue in 1992, making health-care reform the single most important project of his administration.

What has happened since is truly amazing. Many (ourselves included) thought that Clinton's plan—which had been carefully crafted with the help of health-care industry representatives to avoid impinging on the major capitalist interests involved (insurance, pharmaceuticals, equipment manufacturers, for-profit hospitals and HMO's)—would be acceptable to the Washington political establishment and that the main opposition would come from the proponents of the single-payer (Canadian-style) system, the central feature of which is the elimination of private health insurance, thus saving the public the 25 percent or so of the health-care dollar that now

(Continued on page 50)

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BETWEEN GLOBALISM

Edited by RALPH MILIBAND and LEO PANITCH

30th Anniversary Issue

RALPH MILIBAND	Thirty Years of the Socialist Register
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MANFRED BIENEFELD	Capitalism and the Nation-State in the Dog Days of the Twentieth Century
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